

you are every bit of beautiful

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The coffee machine breaks at two in the morning, and Aya discovers real food in her flat.

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Chapter 1

It is two in the morning when a sleep and coffee-deprived Aya finally walks into that room.

It's always every twelve midnight that Aya goes downstairs and fixes herself a cup of coffee to keep her awake for the night in order to finish her homework due tomorrow. Lately, she's started to smell a certain kind of scent - it's faint, but it makes her salivate, so it's most definitely food. And *good* food, at that. That was almost something that was extinct in their flat.

And for every night, Aya had had to ignore her complaining stomach and live off her halfheartedly-made coffee instead of following the scent and begging the source of the good food to marry her. Ahh, if only.

Now, though? Now, she had been in the middle of cramming for an exam and had completely forgotten about her (mid)nightly routine. So when she had abruptly remembered that coffee had already become her lifeblood, she had gone down at two in the God be damned morning and was starting up the coffee machine. Again. It had broken down twice in the last fifteen minutes somehow.

"Goddamnit," she says under her breath, not for the first time, or even the fourth. Her hand slips, and it *bang* s against the machine, causing her to emit a*FUCK* and the machine to make the mechanical version of a dying-animal noise. The dark brown liquid spills all over the countertop and on Aya's favorite autumn-orange jacket. "Oh, fucking fuck," she says, her voice completely flat. College life.

She glances up towards the stairs that led up to her room. Then she looks back down on her coffee-stained jacket and decides that she is not going all the way back up there. The scent of warm, delicious food wafts through the air, drifting into her nostrils and alerting her empty stomach. A wistful sigh unconsciously escapes her half-parted

lips. "I'm hungry," she says, more out of necessity than anything else.

A few more drops of coffee trickle onto her jacket once again, and she lets out a loud curse at the unexpected liquid. Frantically wiping off the coffee only makes it into an even worse stain. She sighs again. "What a fucking night."

There is a creak somewhere down the hall, and the scent of food grows ever stronger. Aya perks up momentarily, instinctively glancing around to search for the source. Then, a quiet voice, "U-Um..."

"Hello? Who's there?" Aya exclaims, excitedly looking about. So long as it isn't Momiji or Reimu or someone she can embarrass herself in front of, then that would be a godsend.

"Ah. Over here." More creaking, and then light footsteps padding down the dimly-lit hall. A brunette emerges from the shadows, hunched over slightly and her brown eyes flickering left to right, never looking directly at Aya. "H... Hello."

"Hmm?" Aya peers at the brunette's clothes. Purple, black, checkered... and her long brown hair arranged in messy twintails. "Right, I remember you! You're Himekaidou... ahh, Hotate, right? The scallop girl?"

"S-Sorry?!" She explodes, shoulders straightening with a jolt. "I-It's *Hatate!* Ha-ta-te! Get it right, Sh-*Shameimaru!* "

Ooh, sensitive. "Whoops. Sorry 'bout that then, hmm... Himekaidou-san!"

"... Hatate is fine," the brunette replies, her voice having gone down in volume considerably. "Just don't forget it again. Shameimaru.... -san."

"Ah, then, do you have food, Hatate-san?" Aya eagerly asks - she can't miss out on an opportunity to get some real food. Hopefully. "I

know it's two am, we hardly know each other, and I just forgot your name, but can you *pleeease* give me some food? Or at least coffee?"

Hatate hesitates before hunching down into her previous position again, fumbling with her fingers. "Um. T-That is.... Alright, then, i-if it's fine..."

Oh, praise the God above. Aya just about leaps after the brunette like a needy puppy, thanking her excitedly. The situation is strange, almost surreal, but Aya can barely care. Food! Food! Food!

Then it occurs to her - the delicious scent of food is getting closer and closer, more and more inviting. By the time the duo have entered Hatate's room, Aya is practically drooling.

The brunette takes a look behind her, brow furrowed in... what? Nervousness? Fright? It's *some* thing, that's for sure. "You're the one who comes down here at midnight and makes coffee while saying *fuck* all the time, right? I can hear you all the way from here through a solid door, you know. You're not exactly quiet."

Aya manages a weak grin. "Yeah, well. College."

"I know." Hatate turns left, entering what looks like a kitchen. That's when Aya feels like she's gone to heaven and doesn't ever want to return - the massive amount of food lying before her on the counter is certainly something resembling heaven. In particular, it's where the fragrance of food is strongest.

"I get stressed from all the homework sometimes, so I cook up a storm to let it out," Hatate murmurs, just barely audible. "It makes a nice lunch when I'm too busy... or lazy... to buy some."

"Hatate-san, I think I'm in love with you, will you marry me?"

"Just eat already," the brunette responds, red in the face. She shoves a plate of tenderloin steak, something Aya barely sees

anymore.

She digs in with a kind of gusto she hasn't had in quite a long time.

"Is that the fire alarm?" Hatate exclaims, shooting up from her seat. Aya, in turn, blinks awake - the tea she had been sipping had been so warm, she'd just about fallen asleep. Then she registers the blaring sound in the air, and nearly drops her teacup - it *is* the fire alarm.

The duo are stumbling out of the room immediately, only stopping for Aya to grab her still-stained jacket from the couch. The reporter had been a tad guilty to just leave the food behind, but it couldn't be helped. They tripped and tumbled down the flights of stairs and finally smashed right through the door in a frenzy, both of them panting and sweating like they had ran a marathon. Which, considering how exactly many stairs they had just gone down, wouldn't be so much of an exaggeration.

Aya takes her time to collapse on the sidewalk and catch her breath, panting like a horse, while Hatate looks up at their flat, scanning the building for the supposed fire. Despite the still-blaring alarm, though, the flat looked perfectly fine. The brunette felt her eye twitch irritably.

"There... is no fire," Hatate says slowly, trying to reign in her anger.

Aya glances up, confused. "Wha--? But then... the alarm..." It takes her a minute to process it, but once she does, she gives out a *done-with-this-shit* sigh. "Hundred yen it was Kijin. Again."

"Personally, I think it was Komeiji Koishi-san," Hatate comments offhandedly, before taking a seat on the sidewalk beside Aya. A cold morning breeze blew, making her shiver. "... Rather cold..."

"Wanna borrow it?" Aya asks jokingly, handing over her stained jacket, which was about as cold as the rest of the area. Much to her

surprise, the brunette takes it right out of her hands and wraps it around herself, muttering a quick thanks towards the reporter.

Hatate peers at the jacket in curiosity. "Is this... coffee?"

"Uh," Aya says.

The brunette shakes her head and looks away, burying most of her face in the jacket collar. Aya suppresses a squeal at the sight, but a stupid little smile springs up on her face. "You're cute," she blurts out, the early morning air getting to her.

Hatate looks up, eyes half-closed. "Shameimaru-san." Her voice slurs slightly, and she shivers before curling up even tighter. "Um. You're not. Finished eating my food yet," she mumbles out, her consciousness slipping away incredibly quickly.

Aya grins like an idiot at the scene in front of her - a half-asleep brunette in her coffee-stained jacket that would take years to clean and scrub off. "Is it too early to ask for your number?"